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December 24, 1980

Mr. Donn F. Widmayer
U. S. Steel Corporation
Western Ore Operations
P. O. Box 569
Lander, Wyoming 82520

RE: Desert Mound Mine
ACT/021/003

Dear Mr. Widmayer:

The Division is in receipt of U. S. Steel's notice of October 21, 1980, to resume operations at the above-noted mine. At this time, the Division and U. S. Steel must proceed with the permit approval process in order for this mine to operate in accordance with the Utah Mined Land Reclamation Act.

The mining and reclamation plans (MRP) which were submitted to the Division on June 20, 1977, and August 22, 1978, have been reviewed. It was found that only a few minor points of clarification are required. We would appreciate your answer on these matters as soon as possible.

Also, a cost for reclamation has been calculated based on the best information available. We would appreciate your review of this estimate. It must be kept in mind that costs are figured on the basis of the State having to enter an area and reclaim the site if it were abandoned by an operator.

The points of clarification needed are as follows:

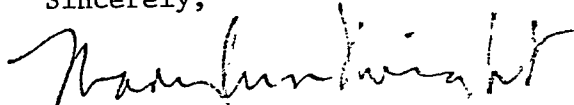
1. An updated map is needed with the 660 acres of disturbance, or proposed disturbance, more clearly indicated. That is, the new tailings disposal pit and water storage pit are not indicated on the map, nor is their location explained in the Form MR-8. Also, the location of the 100 acres disturbed by UII yet to be used for USS mining operations is not indicated by location.

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2. The matter of test plots has not been further addressed since the commitment to implement them was made in the MRP dated June 20, 1977.
3. It is not clear in the MRP whether the stabilization of pit waste is occurring as part of the mining process or will be done at the end of mining or filling up a waste dump site. As can be seen in the reclamation estimate, this is a costly item if left until the end of mining.

The Division would appreciate your rapid review of this matter and would like to meet with you to expedite the approval process.

Sincerely,



MARY ANN WRIGHT
RECLAMATION BIOLOGIST

Enclosure

MAW/btm